

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

DECEMBER 1977 NO. 28

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£5 MILLION - FOR THE PEOPLE OF HACKNEY?

The £5M grant to Hackney and Islington announced in Parliament by Peter Shore, recently could be just the first instalment of a much-needed, and long-awaited, cash injection for our inner urban areas.

But there's a catch....

Whether Hackney gets any more money (and whether it gets its fair share of the £5M promised to the two boroughs) depends on how quickly and positively the Council acts. And that may be a tall order for a Council like Hackney.

This "partnership scheme" (the "partners" are not just the two councils, Hackney and Islington, but also the GLC, ILEA, the Area Health Authority and the Department of the Environment DOE) is somewhat of a mystery in Hackney. The borough treasurer and chief executive have already indicated to one back-bench councillor that they are not sure how much real money is available.

What is exciting - and different - about the money being provided under the Government's new plan for inner urban areas is that it is specifically meant to involve community projects. The DOE is known to have noticed that community activity in Hackney has mushroomed over the last few years. Projects like Chats Palace and Centerprise and campaigns like that for better nurseries and to save the Barbould Road area of Stoke Newington from demolition are known to have impressed the men from the ministry.

The possibility that money may be used to finance the development of the community by the people who live in it may be remote.

The committee that decides where the money will go will be composed of bureaucrats and politicians - timeservers all. But it is a chance, nevertheless.

But is Hackney so badly run - by its councillors and top officers - that the money will not arrive, or be wasted? Hackney People's Press looks at the full story inside. We also examine the other area of main government support for local authorities, the Rate Support Grant. SEE PAGE 4.

Council to Sponsor Anti-Abortion Hostel

Hackney Council is planning to sponsor a hostel for homeless young pregnant women which will be run by Let Live, an anti-abortion organisation.

This is the result of a decision made by the Council's Housing Management Committee in October following a report by the Chief Housing Officer.

Under the new Homeless Persons Act local authorities have more responsibility for housing various sections of the community, among them young pregnant women.

The Chief Housing Officer's Report said that Let Live ("A Caring Organisation for Girls and Women Unhappily Pregnant but Unwilling to Use Abortion to Solve their Problem" - according to their internal newsletter) had approached Hackney Council offering to set up a hostel. If the Council ratifies the Committee's decision then Let Live will apply for short-life property for their hostel.

Let Live has an address in Kyverdale

Road, N16 and already has contact telephone numbers in Hackney, the rest of London and the rest of England. It supports SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) and similar organisations and is itself frequently helped with office space and donations by the Catholic Church. Several branches have become registered Housing Associations which entitle them to local authority funds.

Let Live volunteers run the contact telephone service and are trained in

LET LIVE
A Caring Organisation for Girls and Women Unhappily Pregnant but Unwilling to Use Abortion to Solve their Problem
Registered as a Charity

TELEPHONE
Office (9 am to 12 mid-day) 01-806 1984
For girls needing help

London Area
01-231 0271
01-597 3288
01-467 0544
01-800 4850
0533 708192
Leicester
051 928 9160
Liverpool
051 548 2222

counselling techniques so that they can offer "advice" to young pregnant women. This advice is always slanted against abortion and encourages them to come into their accommodation to have their babies.

Meanwhile, abortions are still no easier to get in Hackney on the National Health Service. The Community Health Council's booklet "Health in Hackney" offers constructive advice to pregnant women of any age who want abortions. This is available, FREE, from the CHC at 210 Kingsland Road E2, or from Centerprise, Chats Palace, Wally Foster Centre and other outlets.



Firemen on the picket line at Homerton Fire-station

FIREMEN DO HAVE A CONSCIENCE BUT CONSCIENCE DOES NOT PAY THE BILLS

It seems unlikely that the Firemen's dispute will be settled by the time you read this. The Government is trying to make an example of the Firemen, knowing that if they win their claim then other underpaid workers will also be able to break through the 10% guideline. The Firemen for their part are becoming more determined to get a decent living wage and public support is growing - despite the hue and cry raised by the press and television.

Much has been made of the fact that the Firemen's claim amounts to an average 30% rise - yet what the Firemen are asking for is the average national wage plus 10% for the dangers they face and the unpleasant jobs they have to do such as cutting people from cars after road accidents. This claim comes to 30% because the Firemen are so badly paid. In the last four years, four independent inquiries have been held and each has recommended a large increase in pay and a reduction in the forty-eight hour week - but nothing has come of them. As long ago as 1918 the Fire Brigades Union passed a motion calling for a forty hour week; now they've finally been forced by the Government and the employers to strike. Firemen have been leaving the service at an alarming rate - forced out by the poor pay. A Glasgow Fireman commented that they are short of at least 200 men in Strathclyde.

Breathing Apparatus

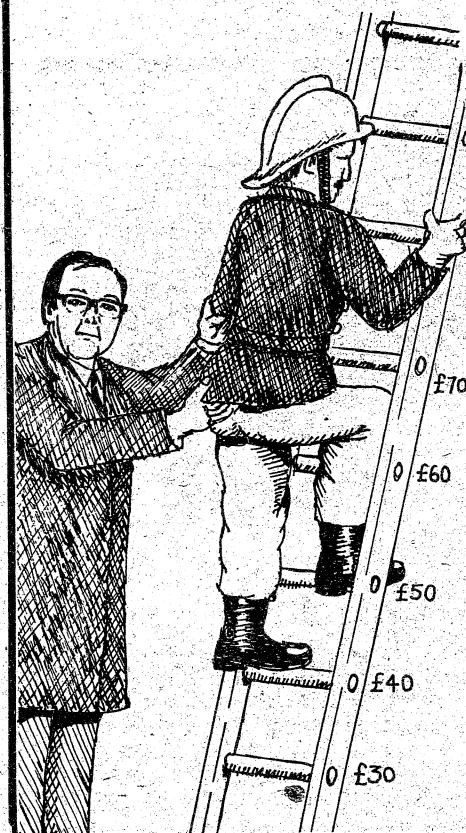
Meanwhile the Firemen on strike say they have been saving lives, not just by going to help whenever lives are in danger, but also by refusing to let the inexperienced troops use their breathing apparatus.

I found out why the breathing apparatus is so dangerous to untrained soldiers when I visited a fire-station just outside Hackney last week. I tried on the heavy air bottle and claustrophobic mask. The apparatus is complicated, and under pressure in the frightening gloom of a smoke-filled building it would be all too easy for a fatal

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AT LAST ... THE HOMELESS GET IN ON THE ACT

After 1 December the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 which was passed by Parliament in July comes into legal force on local authorities. One of the main criticisms by local authorities of the Act is that no extra cash will come from Central Government to pay for the extra duties. HPP presents you with a Question and Answer guide:

THE STATUTORY DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

A person is homeless if there is no accommodation he is entitled to occupy, or if he has accommodation but

1. cannot secure entry to it (eg if illegally evicted)
2. may suffer violence if he or she occupies it
3. has a mobile home, caravan, or house-boat etc but no place to park or moor it.

It defines those threatened with homelessness as those likely to become homeless within 28 days.

Q.1. Who is responsible for the homeless now?

A. Before the Act the only statutory responsibility for homelessness lay in the 1948 National Assistance Act which simply required Social Services Authorities to provide temporary accommodation for those in urgent need. After December 1 the responsibility for providing homes for people without them is firmly where it should be: with the Housing Depts.

Q.2. Will all homeless people have a right to local authority housing now?

A. No. Only those who come in the following priority groups.

- a. families with dependent children
- b. pregnant women (i.e. as soon as they are pregnant)
- c. adult households in which one or more persons are vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability
- d. those who are homeless as a result of fire, flood or other emergency.

Q.3. Does the Act do anything for the single homeless?

A. Yes. For the first time local authorities have a statutory duty to give advice and assistance to homeless people outside the priority groups.

Q.4. Can all of those homeless in the priority groups now look forward to permanent council housing in a short space of time?

A. Yes, with the exception of those who the Act defines as intentionally homeless. These are people whom the local authority believe have made themselves deliberately homeless in order to jump the waiting list queue. They will only be given advice, assistance and temporary accommodation.

If a local authority will not accept rehousing responsibility for someone they must give their reasons in writing.

Q.5. Does a local authority have to provide housing for a homeless family even if that family has only lived in the area for a very short time?

A. Initially, yes; but the Act makes provision for local authorities to make arrangements between themselves for the permanent rehousing of a family who have applied to them as homeless in an area in which they have no local connection.

New nursery scheme

Hackney Council must be congratulated on a pilot scheme, which will begin in January in the nursery class at both Gayhurst and Comet Schools. Nursery class usually finishes about 3.30 pm and are staffed by nursery teachers and assistants, who are employed by the Education Authority. In this pilot scheme the Council will be extending the day until 6.00 pm. This will make it easier for working mums, unmarried dads etc who often have to find additional care facilities for their children when the nursery class finishes. The Council will employ "Care Staff", who will arrive early in the afternoon. They will also look after them during the extended period when the nursery teachers and assistants have left.

Although several authorities are operating an extended nursery class day, Councillor Steve Scott (Chairman, Social Services Committee) said that Hackney Council are the first to arrange for the Care Staff to arrive early in the afternoon. This, said Cllr Scott would mean that the children would not experience a sharp break between the normal and extended day.

During the extended period the children will move to a different room, which will have more of a home environment.

The pilot scheme will involve initially at least six children in each school. These children will be chosen from those already attending the class. In the Spring term ten children will be able to stay during the extended period.

The Council hopes to extend the concept of extended nursery class care to the long school holidays. It is hoped that the nursery classes will remain open, staffed by the Council's Care Staff. As far as it is known Hackney is the first authority planning to extend this scheme to the school holidays.

A Council Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday 29 November when the details of this pilot scheme will be discussed and ratified. In our next issue we will publish the details which emerge from this meeting.



FIREMEN (cont. from page 1)

slip to be made. The station officer who had been a Fireman for twenty-four years told me that he would never allow a Fireman with less than eighteen months experience to use the equipment - it was just too dangerous.

Picket on Minister

When Government Minister Michael Foot recently came to open the new Labour and Trades Hall, local Firemen tried to put their case to him - but

FACTS

Firemen work a 48-hour week for 20% less than the national average wage.

A Fireman with a wife and two children under 11 years takes home:

£41.07 on appointment
£45.27 during his fourth year
£48.29 - qualified Fireman's rate
No rent allowances or free housing are given to the Firemen.

Firemen do not receive extra payments for their 15-hour night shifts or weekend working. They provide a service 24 hours a day every day of the year.

Last year alone 342 Firemen were seriously injured and 5 killed on duty.

they were barred at first from entering the hall due to fire regulations! When they eventually managed to see Foot he merely repeated the Government's line that nobody could get more than 10%. The Government's argument is that the country cannot afford to pay workers a decent wage, yet in the first nine months of this year one insurance company, the Royal, reported an increase in profits compared to last year of over £50M. The Fireman's claim would amount to £40M a year - how much profit would the insurance companies make if it weren't for the Firemen?

Support

The Firemen are not receiving strike pay - their union has always been so reluctant to strike that they never built up a fund. The men are now collecting donations and signatures for their petition, and any help is welcome even if it's just a flask of coffee to keep them going during the cold nights on picket duty.

One thing is certain - if the Firemen don't win a decent wage, none of us will!



PENSIONERS IN PERIL

Task Force, an organisation dedicated to helping pensioners, may be forced out of Hackney because of lack of money. Task Force helps pensioners with problems such as decorating, window cleaning, repairs, etc and aims to reduce their dependence on an over-worked Social Service. The Hackney branch of Task Force has estimated it requires at least £6250 on top of its annual grant of £5000 from Hackney Council in order to maintain the current level of service to the 1135 elderly people it helps.

The Council's grant has remained constant at £5000 per annum since 1973, and inflation has thus reduced the effectiveness of the grant by over 50% since then. The effect has been catastrophic. In 1970 Task Force had four and-a-half paid workers helping the elderly throughout Hackney. This has been whittled down to two and-a-half workers plus volunteers covering a quarter of the borough adequately and another quarter receiving some help.

In other boroughs, the Council provides 70% of operating costs and the rest comes from the National Task Force organisation. For Hackney, the National Task Force organisation has had to dig deep into their reserves to maintain even this minimal level of aid for the elderly. These reserves have now run out, and the local organisation has been told to find 70% of its costs from local sources, as more support is unfair to other branches.

Hackney Task Force has planned an active campaign to get an extra £6250 from Hackney Council. A petition already has more than 1000 signatures, many of those pensioners. Hackney Task Force is also approaching the Council's Social Services Committee.

If the money cannot be found, Task Force will have to withdraw from Hackney - to the detriment of over 1000 pensioners. HPP says PLEASE give Task Force your support!

Short News

S.A.C.U.

A branch of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding has been formed in Hackney/Islington.

SACU is a nationwide organisation with local branches up and down the country. It is open to anyone who favours friendship and understanding between the peoples of Britain and China.

China is very far away from Britain but what happens there is of immense importance to the British people and to mankind in general. Today socialist China adequately feeds, clothes, houses and keeps in good health a population almost one quarter of the world's total.

Yet at the end of World War II China was still a country where 100 years of imperialist aggression and exploitation had caused only poverty, disease, starvation and the death of millions. Today the Chinese people know no unemployment, no homelessness, no inflation, no racism, pay no income tax and enjoy a steadily rising standard of living.

These achievements may seem like a dream to people in Britain but they have become a reality in China where genuine socialist policies have made them possible. SACU aims to inform people of a country where crises such as we know them are not inevitable.

SACU also organises tours to China both of general and specialised interest. Workers tours, Students delegations, Trade Union visits, Educationalists and Health Workers, - and we can provide films and speakers for your organisation on many aspects of life in China today.

Contact: Hackney/Islington Branch, SACU, C/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St E8. Or ring Maureen Taylor or Mon Lawlor on 263 4359. (day-time).

PUBLIC AFFRONT

The Representation of Peoples Act states that during elections, local school halls can be used by the parties contesting the election for public meetings. On 15 November the National Front party used the hall of Tyssen School in Firsley Road, N16 for a meeting where Bill Robinson, their candidate in the Springfield Ward by-election, was due to speak. The meeting, however, was far from public - indeed, the right of admittance was strictly reserved to those who were known to be sympathisers of the Front. The governors of the school had met the evening before the meeting and had unanimously condemned the way the Front had used the hall. Indeed a number of governors and the headmistress were amongst the front line of the 500 demonstrators who picketted the meeting to show their protest. More than 100 police lined the street and separated the demonstrators from the few members of the Front, who kept themselves behind the gates of the school. A number of residents stood nervously in their doorways, unsure of what was happening. "I don't know why we can't live in peace ... I don't understand what's happening to some people", said one local. "Picking on immigrants is just an excuse ... my daughter has got two half caste kids and I'm frightened for our children - they're scared, really scared".

As it turned out the by-election was won by the Labour candidate George Armstrong, who had 982 votes. The Conservatives had 775 votes. The NF had 149 votes and the Liberal and Communist candidates had 66 and 70 votes respectively.

It is typical of the Front who claim to be the party of law and order to show so little respect for the law when it suits them.

It should be remembered that the by-election "meeting" held by the Front should never have been allowed to take place. The meeting was certainly not open to the general public and therefore the hall was used under false pretences.

EMPTY HOMES CAMPAIGN

Our last issue of HPP contained an article which made the case for pressurising the Council to start using empty property to house homeless families who are currently put up in bed and breakfasts. It is quite obviously an example of atrocious housing policy to have thousands of people on the council waiting list who are recognised as being in acute need, and about a hundred homeless families, when there is property lying empty which could be used. In some cases the houses could be made habitable with very little expense.

The case to use empty houses has been made strongly again in a book just published by Ron Bailey, called "Empty Property and the Homeless" (Penguin). Ron's main argument keeps to the economic sense of using empty property. Using Hackney as one of his examples, he goes on to show how Hackney Borough could not only solve the problem of homeless families, but also save the ratepayers of the borough £152,287 in doing so!

This is not some far-fetched scheme, but one that has already been adopted by some enlightened boroughs with great success and saving hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money.

Tower Hamlets was one of the first boroughs to adopt such a scheme.



It is the intention of the recently formed Hackney Community Housing Action Group to completely survey Hackney's housing and to find out where the empty properties are, how long they have been empty, who owns them and then to persuade the Council to get them used.

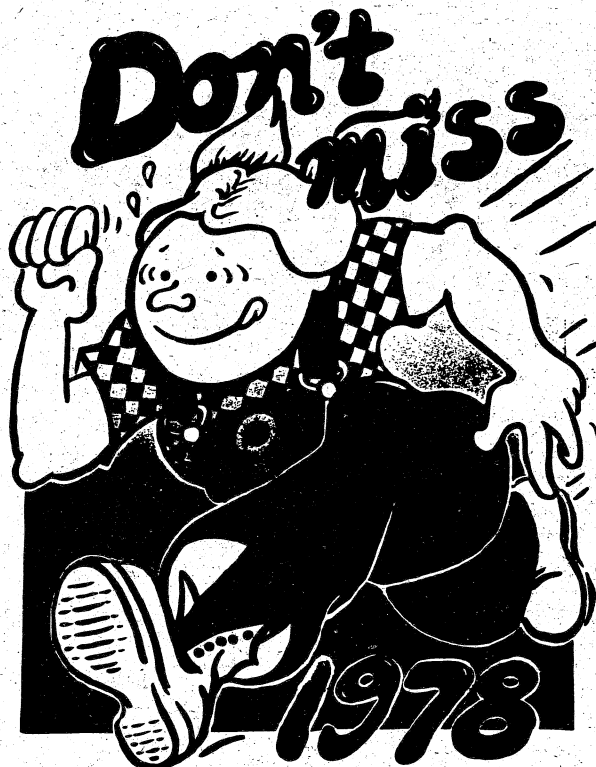
This can only be achieved with your help. If you are prepared to help in any way, write to us at: 136 Kingsland High Street E.8., and come to our first public meeting which will be held on Tuesday 20 December at 8.00 pm at the above address. The meeting will be addressed by someone from the National Empty Homes Campaign and possibly some other speakers. It is an important meeting - please support it.



HEALTH IN HACKNEY is a FREE guide to all the facilities offered by the Health Service in Hackney, and is full of information.

It is published by the City & Hackney Community Health Council and is available from them at 210 Kingsland Road, E.2, or from Centerprise, Chats Palace, Wally Foster Centre and other shops and community centres round the borough.

MORE THAN 100 PAGES - GET ONE FREE!



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DON'T MISS 1978

This is the cover of the Workshop's new calendar, which a group of local people have been busy printing and putting together for the New Year. You can see the prints and how they made them in Centerprise. If you hurry, there are also some copies left on sale in the bookshop.

RAMBLING

Following the success of the Young Naturalists course organised by Centerprise as a summer playscheme this year, a Rambling Club has been set up to occupy itchy feet over the winter. Sunday excursions up the River Lea have already successfully taken place.

The rambles usually start about 10.30am on a Sunday and pass carefully selected pubs en route. Walkers should be back in Hackney by about 3.30pm. Anyone of any age who is interested, and who is capable of walking five or six miles, is welcome.

Get details of the next trip from Ernie Greenwood, 254 7022.

SQUAT DEAL

The GLC have recently announced that they are considering offering tenancies to the occupants of 1,438 of their squatted properties. This move is generally a welcome one, but there are some strings attached.

One is that should an offer be made, there is no guarantee that the home will be of a reasonable standard.

Contrary to the popular press, the majority of squats are of reasonable condition and well maintained by the occupants.

Another problem is that if the property suggested for tenancy is in poor condition and if the squatter justifiably refuses to accept, he may be deemed "voluntarily homeless" under the Homeless Persons Act 1977. This means that he can be evicted.

The GLC have promised that they will use all measures of the law against the squatters who remain in their properties after the 28 November, when their offer expires.

The proposals of the GLC are certainly better than nothing. We should demand to know what the London boroughs intend to do for the 30,000 or so other squatters excluded from this deal. Furthermore, what is to become of all the properties that are vacated when the squatters take up their tenancies?

All squatters in GLC property are urged to contact the London Squatters Union at 5 Huntley Street WC1, tel 580 0855, or Advisory Service for Squatters, 2 St Paul's Road N1, tel 359 8814/5815, or Release, 1 Elgin Avenue W9, tel 289 1123.

THE KINGFISHER

Following last month's article on the River Lea, here is a sonnet by the lockkeeper at Pickets Lock on the river.

*Lying as quiet as can be
Upon the bank of the River Lea,
I saw the proud kingfisher hide,
Within the reeds at the waterside
Resplendent there in gorgeous hue
Of feathered plumage gold and blue,
When suddenly so fast and sleek,
A fish was trapped within its beak,
A gruesome sight to look upon
As with a gulp the fish was gone.
I gazed in awe, but all I saw
Was just a part of nature's law,
Wherein the strong devour the weak,
And beauty hides a cruel streak.*

A. Mottram

MORE SKOOL

The Society for the Welfare of Black Youths and the West Indian Welfare Association are now operating a Supplementary School Project at the Family Centre, 50 Rectory Road N16.

The Supplementary School caters for all age ranges and ability groups. It offers free education to all. We have sessions for youngsters on Saturday mornings (10.00 am-12.00 pm) when we concentrate on reading, writing, history, cultural understanding, recreational pursuits etc.

During the week, Tuesdays and Wednesdays (7.00 pm-8.30 pm) we cater for those needing support in examination subjects; youngsters who wish to enter Colleges of Further Education but need help to pass entrance examinations; anyone who wishes to expand their general education and for anyone who wants to improve their reading and mathematical skills.

We offer a wide range of subjects taught by experienced teachers as well as volunteers.

If you find that what the Supplementary School has to offer will be of help to you or anyone you know, then come and see us on any of the days mentioned above.

The Project is receiving official support but we need community participation.

"Partnership schemes" and "rate support grants" may sound boring and deadly dull. But there are signs that deprived areas like Hackney - and Hackney is the MOST deprived area in the country (that's in the Government's official Census statistics) may be getting more money at last. Below we explain the

background to the £5M grant and what we can anticipate, and also look at how Central Government in fact provides most of the funds for local authorities under the Rate Support Grant.

That £5 million How will the Partners share it?

The "partnership scheme", where inner urban areas receive special grants for "assistance" was announced originally in April when both Lambeth and London's dockland were among the areas to get special help. Hackney Council applied very quickly for a grant from the next phase of partnerships to be announced, but did not put forward a detailed programme of works which required money.

Officials at the Department of the Environment (DOE) decided quite early that Hackney was a prime candidate for receiving this grant, but there were some who felt that it was no use giving the money to Hackney. Why? Because many of the DOE bureaucrats think that Hackney is so poorly managed - both by

money is to be spent - because the DOE will provide officials for the committee which will control the money.

Doubts have already been expressed in Hackney about the way in which the Council will spend the money. There is substantial ignorance amongst councillors - the people we elect - and officers about the scheme. In Islington, councillors and borough officials have already started working very hard to prepare ideas for use of the money. In Hackney members of the Labour party proposed that a "teach-in" should be held so that councillors could learn more. They were told by long-standing Alderman Sir Lou Sherman that "councillors would be informed about what they (ie the senior councillors and Aldermen) were doing". A back-bench councillor complained that they were there not to be informed but to be involved.

As we pointed out in page 1, voluntary agencies and community activity groups are seeking to get involved in the decision-making process. Already Hackney Community Link-Up has written to the Council, and they will be organising their own "teach-in", early in January to brief voluntary organisations. And there should be no shortage of applications under the additional £1M Urban Aid programme (extra to the partnership scheme money).

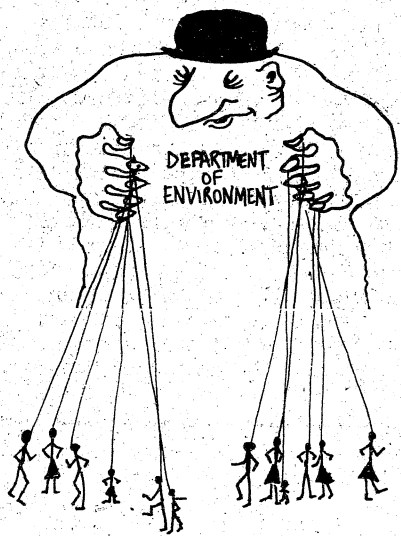
Why else should we be nervous about Hackney not getting as much money as it should? Quite simply, because the Council already does not apply for all the grants that it could. For example, the first Sports Council grant Hackney has ever had is just coming through. As the most deprived area in England, Hackney could have had a Sports Council grant long ago, but it never applied. And similarly with Urban Aid and "Section II" grants. Hackney could have had more of all these if it had applied. Islington, a smaller borough,

gets far more funds from these sources.

Initial use of the £5M will probably be old schemes which have been mooted but shelved through lack of funds. Councillors from the Hoxton area have already suggested many areas where money can be spent and will be involving the local community on consultation and decision-making. Martin Ottolangui, the Council leader has said that "new ideas are necessary now." It could be

that they will be forthcoming. Write to your councillor now!

The partnership scheme could be the source of money yet London's dockland and Lambeth are each receiving £10M a year for 3 years. Hackney and Islington may well get such sizeable funds also. It could be a welcome boost for us - or it could all go to Islington, or it could not come at all. We will report developments!



its top paid officials and its councillors - that the money would be squandered. The delay in Peter Shore's announcement of the second phase (it should have been in September) was because of this feeling in the DOE.

However, a compromise was reached. The money would be given to Hackney, but jointly with Islington which, in the eyes of the DOE is much better run. And there would also be management - or interference - of the way the

Rate Support explained

At the end of November, almost at the same time as the announcement of the £5M partnership agreement between the Government and the boroughs of Hackney and Islington the Department of the Environment announced the amount of next year's rate support grant. In 1976-7 55% of spending by local government was supplied by the rate support grant amounting to some £6,300M and in the poorer boroughs such as Hackney the percentage is higher and rising.

The grant is divided into three sections: the needs, resources and domestic demands. The needs element accounts for 60% of the RSG and is supposed to be based on factors like single parent families, overloaded housing, school children, unemployed. When all these factors are considered Hackney comes out as the most needy borough in the country yet when the actual grant is given out we come twenty-second - does that make sense?

One of the reasons that we don't receive as much as we should is that the needs element is also paid out

according to how much the borough spends the year before. If you don't have the money this year you will suffer next year and so on. The poorer boroughs stay poorer.

The resources element accounts for another 30%. The higher the rateable value of property in the borough, the lower the payment under the resources element - whether the ratepayers can afford the high rates or not. The Inner City boroughs, of which Hackney is one, have the highest rateable values so we are penalised again.

The domestic element, making up the remaining 10%, is a rate relief applied to all ratepayers without regard to whether the rates are still impoverishing the less well off, or if they are benefitting those to whom, because of a high income, the rates don't present a great burden.

The only choice the borough has in this situation if it wants to provide the services we need is to raise the rates - an unacceptable solution since many can't afford the present rates. What happens is that we simply don't get the services we require.

This year the Government have decided to give the boroughs more of the RSG. This isn't enough. What they should do is make sure that places that really need the money get it.



GNOME RULE?

"Hackney is experiencing a vast influx of foreign gnomes", according to a National Grunt spokesman. Coming mainly from Zurich they have formed a ghetto in Holly Street, Hackney. When approached the gnomes refused to comment on what they were doing. The NG spokesman added "They're here to overfish our gold fish ponds, they never work, they just stand around all day - they're all

on Social Security" ...

Gnome nicking has also arrived with the gnomes. These lazy hippies with their bright clothes have a nasty habit of disappearing in the night, being kidnapped to other people's gnomes. Are gnomes more trouble than their mirth?

Picture taken at Holly Street

HACKNEY LEGAL ACTION GROUP
Hackney Advice Bureau and Law Centre

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LEGAL HELP**

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Arrested?

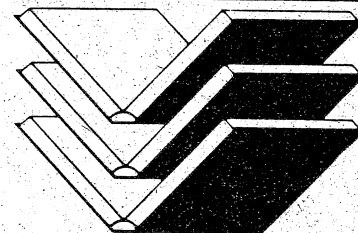
Helping the Police with their enquiries?

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Pilger and the Hackney Hospital

the unacceptable face of "investigative" journalism

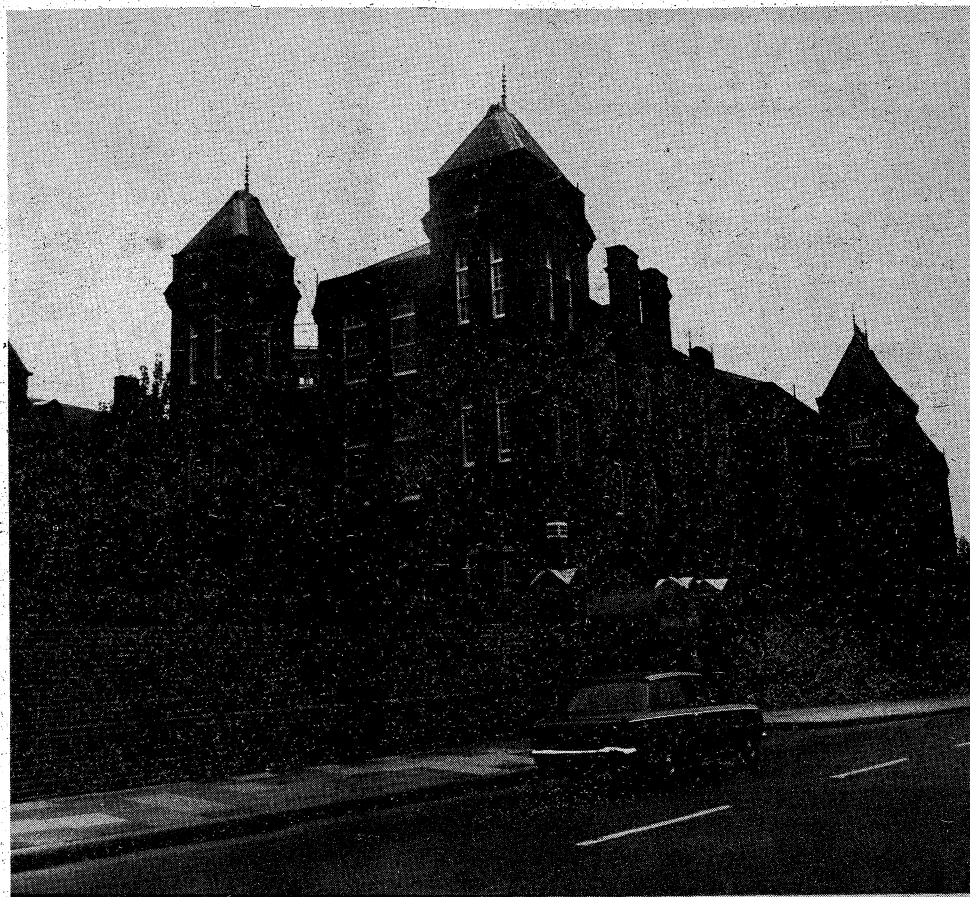
A few months ago yet another team of TV journalists, headed by John Pilger, was given permission to film in the Hackney Hospital a programme on the effect that the cuts were having on the standard of health care.

It is not difficult to take a hospital built 100 years ago, comprising the old Hackney workhouse, and with a hand held camera on a gloomy day make it look like a dump. Pilger did not miss his cue. There were shots of empty wards, an overcrowded x-ray department, interviews on a particularly Homerton High Street, all designed to produce the desired effect. It was special pleading with a vengeance. And the script was cut to be deliberately misleading, thus the famous comment "I wouldn't let my wife be treated there" from a consultant - though a comment on the Mothers' Hospital, was made to appear a comment on the Hackney itself. And the fact that an anaesthetist had to travel 2 miles for emergency operations at the Mothers' was also shown as a reflection of the lack of facilities at the Hackney.

The Area Health Authority got wind of this piece of 'investigative' journalism and tried to suppress it. First they tried to take out an injunction to prevent it being shown. Then they tried to intimidate those who had taken part. A young black female anaesthetist was summoned to the offices of the Hospital secretary and told to retract what she had said on the programme. And then, in an act of subliminal racism, was told that the hospital authorities would draw up a statement for her to sign saying that she no longer agreed with what she had said on the programme.

Pilger rose to the occasion again. You make a distorted programme, thus provoking people to overreact, and then cry innocent, and shout about the freedom of the press and the suppression of information. He proceeded to mobilise opinion in his favour, especially amongst the junior doctors. The junior doctors, who have no love for the administration, duly delivered the goods, in the form of a letter to the Minister of Health expressing support for Pilger and demanding that "something be done". Something was not done, and after a flurry of letters in the Hackney Gazette the controversy settled - leaving only an even greater antipathy between the community and its local hospital.

Ironically, however, Pilger had stumbled on an issue of real importance. The programme about the Hackney was worthless in that the only crucial question about a hospital is the standard of medicine it delivers, and Pilger was unable to challenge that in the Hackney it is as good as anywhere in London, combining all the advantages of a relatively small district hospital with access to specialist departments at Barts and the London. However the Mothers' is a different case altogether, and it was the national publicity surrounding this war on the face of the health services in Hackney that made the Pilger programme worthwhile. However the council point was missed - which is that the existence of the Mothers' and the antiquated service it offers is not a product of "the cuts", but of the misguided and misplaced energies of those who had campaigned to keep it



open. Put simply there is a block in the Hackney Hospital which needs renovating but as the maternity block of the Hackney Hospital delivered efficiently 2,500 babies per year, this is where the obstetric service should be centered. There is another hospital two miles away with no anaesthetist, no team specialising in resuscitation, no doctors skilled in the treatment of cardiological conditions or diabetes (two major risk factors in pregnancy), no intensive care facilities for high risk babies. All these facilities are provided at the Hackney. Why then were the maternity facilities transferred to the Mothers' - against all medical advice? Probably the full answer

will never be known. The cuts are in part responsible in that it was no longer economically justifiable to keep open two obstetric departments so close together. But the real blame must lie with those who campaigned to keep it open - particularly the Community Health Council, the Trades Council and local opportunist politicians, a decision openly connived at by the area health authority for whom the transfer of obstetric services to the Mothers' was the cheaper option. That which they sow also will they reap - for the working class of Hackney, an infant mortality rate 25 per cent higher than the national average. A crime against the people of Hackney.

ANANDA MARGA FOOD FOR ALL WOMENS' CENTRE

We came here in October of '76 so we've been here for just over a year, and have got to know a lot of people in this area which I find most interesting because of the total variety of cultures. Still, I'm sure a lot of people don't even know we exist. So we are grateful for the opportunity to let you know the facilities available here. Some will know "Food For All" and the "Women's Centre" where we have the Cheap Kitchen on Wednesdays and Fridays, but be unaware that we hold regular meetings on meditation, yoga and relaxation. Through this centre we hope to encourage people from all walks of life; to tap their vast creative resources and share their talents with others. The centre serves as a meeting place for a wide variety of people and all seem glad to meet and share their common interests.

Ananda Marga's primary aim is to help every being uncover their own true nature, and by awakening the spirit of oneness in people, to erase the false barriers and form one universal human society. This means examining our inner self and trying to become more subtle and aware in all aspects of daily life. This is one reason why we have chosen wholefoods as an example

of awareness and all round development. All the foods we sell are beneficial to the physical, mental and spiritual nature of the individual, when taken and prepared in a loving way which respects the divine nature within the giver, the receiver and that which is given; they all become one within each other. We choose not to eat any meat, certain vegetables like onions, garlic, mushrooms and very hot spice because they stimulate crude aspects and generally have an acidic effect which can be harmful.

We hold classes for those who have difficulty in relaxing and are therefore tense. There are separate classes for men and women, both old and young on Monday afternoons and Thursday evenings. Anyone is welcome to enroll. There is a minimum charge of ten pence per person per session which usually last an hour and a half. Yogi teachers regularly visit the centre to give lectures on spiritual and to give private instruction on meditation and spiritual practise. All this is done without charge. We hope that more people will come and help to make the project grow into an example of positive co-operation.

I CAZENOVE ROAD, LONDON N16.

The purpose of the Women's Centre is to promote the well being of all women. There has long been an oppression of women in society, and having a centre allows women to share a developing awareness of their situation and to join in many activities together. We all have to realise that women represent half of society, and if not given the chance to develop their potential, this will impede the growth of the other half as well. "It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing."

The Women's Centre opened in February of this year and the women who started it are members of Ananda Marga. This connection makes spiritual practice available to women free of charge, if they wish to learn, but women attending need not feel any commitment to Ananda Marga. The universal outlook of meditation is the sentiment behind all activities going on. These are varied so that women can contribute to, and learn about different aspects of their lives physically, intellectually and spiritually. We have made a start to cover these aspects in different activities, like open discussions, adult literacy, yoga and relaxation classes, a guitar group and playschool. We recently arranged a music event and a seminar on Women and Spirituality. Our future plans are to encourage women to learn practical skills such as

Mechanics, First Aid, Self defense and to organize projects to help single mothers, handicapped, elderly and all kinds of deprived women.

It is also very practical from wider view points of world food economy. Vegetable protein can be produced in many different forms anywhere where there is land; and for the same area of land ten times as much vegetable protein can be produced as compared to meat. We try to encourage people to grow their own vegetables by bringing together those who have gardens, but can't manage them and those who wish to cultivate, but have no access to land. So far we have more gardens than people.

We are converting the basement into a crafts room where women will be able to learn pottery, printing, photography, silk-screen, weaving etc. We are directing our attention to the immediate issues and daily struggles in women's lives; such as Rape, Abortion, Birth-control, mental health, economic disadvantages, medical information and the exploitation of the female sex.

To support the basic running costs of the centre, as well as to introduce vegetarianism, we opened a "Cheap Kitchen" for everyone, open two nights a week. Up to now a full vegetarian meal cost 25p, but our expenses require us to increase the price to 40p.

We welcome all women to the centre and if you would like more information please contact us.

WARNING: This article should not be read by persons of a nervous disposition!

....and things that go bump in the night!!

Borley Rectory in Essex is the most haunted house in Britain. This place has five ghosts in it. One is Stopping Nun, who kneels and mourns by graves. Sometimes she is seen at day, but mostly she is seen by night. Another ghost of Borley Rectory is Floating Brick. Floating Brick, as its name implies, floats through the air. Only one person has taken a picture of Floating Brick. Harry Price investigated Borley Rectory and Borley Church. When investigated, objects were thrown around the place. If you saw a programme called the Ghost Hunters, you will have seen Harry Price's investigation of Borley Church.

Another mystery is Witch in the Window. Although she is called Witch in the Window, she is really a Witch in a Mirror. On stormy nights if you look into the mirror you might see her face. The mirror is not on a wall, but on a dressing table. Witch in the Window is not a mystery of Borley Church or Borley Rectory.



Carrying on with the subject of things that go bump in the night we went to a talk held recently at the Town Hall by Eric Maple on the subject of ghosts. His talk was very interesting, and was illustrated with many colourful and eerie slides - like, as he described it - a "talking book".

The first slide was of a skull on top of an old book - what Mr Maple aptly described as "getting your teeth into a good book".

He said that a ghost is the spirit of someone who has died, but has not passed on into the other world. They can only be removed by powerful exorcism, which is just like a funeral service. The old story is that ghosts, like vampires and werewolves rise at midnight and must be back by dawn. People say there's a ghost in every churchyard - usually it is the spirit of the last person to be buried there. A ghost never speaks until it is spoken to - if you are lucky, or unlucky, enough to meet a ghost, don't worry. Just say to it "What troubleth thou?" - it will be most offended if you run away!

But why are there ghosts? He said that if a person died in violent circumstances - such as suicide or execution - its spirit would be unable to pass into the other world, and so would have to remain in this world as a ghost. Most ghosts stem from the seventeenth century, when there were a lot of wars and, presumably, more people died violently.

Actually, ghosts appear to be more active at the beginning of winter. Ghost stories have been in existence certainly since 1500 - but these were usually to keep people on the "straight and narrow". He said that England is the most haunted country in the world, and that most people are proud if their home is haunted.

After his talk, we went and interviewed Eric Maple and he came up with some very interesting answers.

How did his interest in ghosts start?

"I used to collect country witch stories, but I was flooded with ghost stories, so I started to collect ghost stories. I wrote a book on the subject, and now I also do radio and television talks".

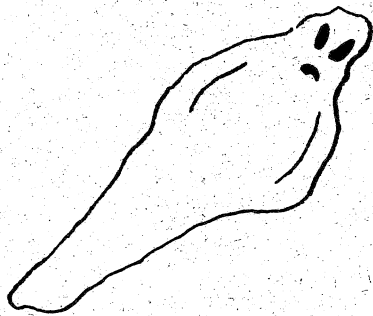
Has this interest led him into any interesting situations?

He said that he once spent the night in Betterscombe Manor - notorious for its "screaming skull". All night he heard a rattling above his head. In the morning, they told him it was ghosts playing skittle with the skull!

Then we asked him if he had ever visited Borley Rectory, which is supposed to be the most haunted place in Britain. He said that he had visited it recently, but he hadn't seen anything. He did tell us, though, that there is a man who sits at the Church every Saturday night wearing infra-red glasses waiting to see the ghosts! Incidentally, the Rectory was burned down in 1939, and only the Church remains.

We then asked him if he thought that ghosts were in any way linked with things like UFOs. He said that he didn't think there was any connection, but that many sightings, such as lights floating across Scottish lochs, probably were UFOs rather than ghosts, which is what they were originally thought to be.

If you are a young person who is interested in ghosts and ghost stories, Mr Maple gives you this advice: ask people for their ghost stories and get them down in a notebook before you forget them. With your stories, keep to a certain area or your research will be too complicated. However, you will rarely get the cause of the story. The best places for ghosts are churches and churchyards, pubs and old castles and houses. Most of all, look upon the subject as if you are collecting stories, and treat them as stories -

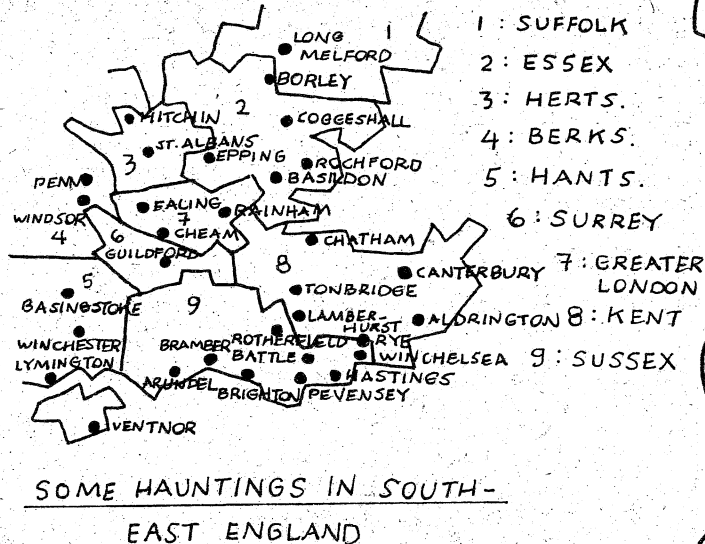


don't go in for things like ougi boards, because they can be dangerous.

Eric Maple himself is a celebrated expert on witchcraft and the supernatural, and has written eleven books on the subject. His latest book is called "Supernatural England" and is published by Robert Hale. If you're interested, you should be able to get it from the library. We would like to thank Mr Maple for all his help in compiling this article.

By the way, if any readers know any ghost stories, we will be pleased to hear of them! Actually Mr Maple had never heard of any ghosts in Hackney, so - get hunting!

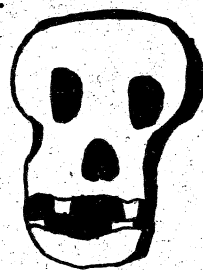
Please send any stories to Hackney Gasbag, c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E.8.



- 1: SUFFOLK
- 2: ESSEX
- 3: HERTS.
- 4: BERKS.
- 5: HANTS.

- 6: SURREY
- 7: GREATER LONDON
- 8: KENT
- 9: SUSSEX

SOME HAUNTINGS IN SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND



COMICS

COMICS - CHILDHOOD WONDERS OR LIFE-LONG NECESSITIES?

Comics - we never grow out of them, do we? However old you are, I bet none of you can resist picking up a comic and reading again the short little stories, be they funny, adventurous or simple stories of mischievous school children, and reliving your youth. Comics play a great role in children's lives, and we decided to go out and see what the comics of today are like. We each read a comic and wrote a short summary of its contents, the age group it is meant for and we gave it a star rating.

- * Unbearable
- ** Quite good
- *** Very good
- **** Faultless

Beezer - 7p weekly, 16 pages long. Incorporates **Cracker**. A few years ago The Beezer was my regular favourite comic, and when I opened it up I was delighted to see all my old favourites - Ginger, the Numskulls, Smiffy, Young Sid the Copper's Kid, the Banana Bunch, Baby Crockett, Little Mo, the Badd Lads, Pop, Dick and Harry and my most favourite - Colonel Blink. I was glad to see that all their adventures hadn't changed - Smiffy is still getting dirty each time he steps outside the door and Colonel Blink is still as short-sighted as ever, which leads him into some very funny situations - but is this good? After three years, there was only one new story - Mr Flippy - and that wasn't up to much. I think the layout is very good, and the artwork is faultless. As for Crackers, which is sandwiched in the middle. I found that dreary and boring - the layout is unimaginative and too cramped, although, unlike the Beezer, it is full colour. Still, the whole thing is very cheap and well within pocket money range. Suitable for 8-12 year olds. ***-star rating.

Bullet - 7p weekly. Bullet is my regular comic; I get it every Saturday and it is worth the money. There are many good stories like Frontline UK, Kid Cox and Smasher. Kid Cox is a story about a footballer whose arch-enemy is Captain Warren. Fireball is the main character in Bullet. He takes the news page. The age group for Bullet is 8-13. ****-star rating.

Mandy - 7p weekly, 32 pages long. For "girly" girls between about 8 and 15. One of the most stupid comics I have ever come across. Stories centre round girly competitiveness, spitefulness, do-goodery and a hollow form of "magic". Maudlin in concept, feeling, design and language. *-star rating.

Warlord - 7p weekly. Warlord is a fully adventurous war comic with mild action stories which involve different sides in the fighting. There's Force Viper with a squad of marines in Japan, Killer Kane, a pilot and his Hurricane, fighting the Germans from his cave on an autobahn in Austria, and 'Sniper' Kelly hunting down an SS Colonel. The newest story 'Warsaw Boy', is about a boy who saw his family killed by Germans. There are one or two others stories in this comic. The main story of course - which makes up the best part of the comic - is Lord Peter Flint ... codename WARLORD. Warlord is a very popular war comic and mostly for people aged 7-14. ***-star rating.

Beano - 5p weekly, 18 pages long. Just the same as it's always been - with the same old favourites - Dennis the Menace, Rodger the Dodger, Lord Snooty, Minnie the Minx etc. The drawings are more interesting than most comics and there's variety too - stories keep you reading at least and many are funny. Definitely better than most and it has lasted! ***-star rating.

Krazy Comic - 8p weekly, 32 pages long. I can't make this one out. The cover boasts "the paper that even some adults sneak a look at!" - and I imagine it's true. By and large its just plain ole silly stories are weak, but the cartoons are really lively, very much in the style of film cartoons. There's a lot of variety but "Krazy" falls down because a lot of the material simply isn't funny enough. **-star rating.

The Hackney Gasbag and Bill the Blob was written, drawn, edited and pasted up by Steven Baker, John Cronin, Mark Lawrence, David Lawrence, James Manlove, Francesca Wolf and Veronica!!

Information



All listings on this page are inserted absolutely FREE.
For the next issue just send us your information by
Friday 23 December.

Write to Hackney People's Press, Box 1, c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E.8.

Community, Tenants and Pensioners Groups

HACKNEY PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION
34 Dalston Lane, E8
Advice service on Tuesday and Thursdays from 10.30 to 4pm. Tea Bar Monday to Friday 10.30 to 4pm.

TASK FORCE
34 Dalston Lane, E8. Tel. 254 1620
Free advice for pensioners in Hackney. Odd jobs and visits in N16 and N4 only. Pensioners' activities and neighbourhood care in N5.

HACKNEY ASSOCIATION FOR WELFARE OF OLD PEOPLE
22 Dalston Lane, E8. Tel. 254 0715

HARAMBEE 2 PROJECT
Upper Clapton Congregational Hall, E5.
Social and advice centre, aimed particularly at black people.
Tuesday 10am-10pm
Thursday 10am-4.30pm
Friday 10am-10pm

OFF CENTRE
25 Hackney Grove, E8. Tel. 985 8566
Advice for young people between 13 and 25 with any problems.
Monday-Friday 10am-6pm (open until 8.30pm on Tuesdays).

FRIENDS ANONYMOUS SERVICE
Friendship House, 27 Hackney Grove, E8.
24 hour telephone service with people always willing to listen and act.
986 2233 (24 hours)
985 0973 (office hours)
986 9146 (office hours)

HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS FEDERATION
Contact Bob Darke, 154 Trelawney Estate, Paragon Road, E9 for details. Represents Borough Council, GLC and private tenants throughout Hackney.

HACKNEY GINGERBREAD
Group for one parent families. Meets every Monday at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16. Creche available. Contact Teresa Blackhall, 729 1647 for details.

HOMERTON GINGERBREAD
Group for one parent families. Meets every other Friday at the Wally Foster Centre. Contact 985 3972 for details.

HACKNEY UNITED TENANTS ASSOCIATION
c/o 35 Finmere House, Woodberry Down, N4.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGLISH CLASSES
Held at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16. Tel. 254 1193. Monday-Friday 10.30am-4.30pm.
Held at the Wally Foster Centre, E9. Tel. 985 3972.
Every Wednesday 1.30pm.

Workshops

THE WORKSHOP
81 Lenthall Road, E8. Tel. 254 3082.
Learn to print posters, T shirts etc. at non-commercial rates. Cost of materials only.
Open Tuesday-Sunday 1pm-8pm.

COMET WORKSHOP
Halcomb Street, N1. Tel. 729 0936.
Learn sewing, macrame, toymaking, woodwork. Creche available, toy library. Tea and coffee. Open every weekday.

Health

CITY AND HACKNEY COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL
Shoreditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road, E2. Tel. 739 6308/8351.
The public's voice in the NHS—provides advice, takes up your complaints and criticisms. Open meeting on 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6.30pm. Publishes HEALTH IN HACKNEY: a comprehensive FREE guide to health facilities and services in the area.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN HACKNEY
Advice, ideas, information. Trying to contact all families in district with a handicapped child. Contact Ann Purdon, 48 Mount Pleasant Lane, E5. Tel. 808 8438.

THE BIRTH CENTRE
188 Old Street, EC1. Tel. 251 4076.
Information, advice, lectures and seminars on birth at home and in hospital.
Open evening every Wednesday 8pm. 25p.

Transport

HACKNEY PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACTION COMMITTEE
Meets regularly to discuss how to improve public transport in Hackney. Contact Tony Jacobs, 3 Hockley House, Morning Lane, E9. Tel. 986 2303.

HACKNEY CYCLISTS ACTION GROUP
Fighting for cycle tracks and better provisions for cyclists. Contact Michael Ellman, 21 Arlington Square, N1. Tel. 226 1887.

Community Centres

CENTERPRISE
136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9632.
Bookshop and office hours:
Tuesday-Saturday 10am-6.30pm.
Coffee bar and meeting room hours:
Tuesday-Friday 10am-10pm
Saturday 10am-6.30pm.
FACILITIES:
Coffee bar; bookshop; advice, information and contacts for individuals and groups. Typewriters can be used free, duplicating at cost price. Ask in General Office.
ADVICE CENTRE:
Legal and welfare advice session on Thursdays 6.30-7.30pm. Contact Jon Webber or ring 254 9634.
READING CENTRE:
For adults who find it hard to read or write. Contact Sue Shrapnel or ring 254 9635.
PUBLISHING PROJECT:
Publishing books by people who live in Hackney. Contact Ken Worpole or ring 254 9634.
YOUTH PROJECT:
Table tennis, music, writing, discussion groups etc. Tuesday to Friday afternoons, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Contact Oliver Flavin.

WALLY FOSTER CENTRE
Homerton Road, E9. Tel. 985 3972.
Community Centre with many activities:
SOCIAL SERVICES ADVICE CENTRE: every weekday 9am-5pm.
ADULT LITERACY CLASSES:
Every Monday at 7pm.
Also playgroup; mothers and toddlers group, pensioners lunch club, school welfare advice, youth club for 5-8 year olds, Kung Fu and juvenile dance classes.
See also ADVICE and NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGLISH CLASSES listings.

THE FACTORY
107 Matthias Road, N16 (next to Newington Green School). Tel. 249 3066.
Runs mothers and toddlers clubs, sewing classes, English classes, youth club, childminders drop-in group (creche provided), after school club, arts and crafts club, pensioners lunch club, food co-op and an Indian dance class.
Contact them for further details.

THE FAMILY CENTRE
50 Rectory Road, N16. Tel. 249 8334.
Information and help for all community problems. Cooking, washing, creche facilities. Mothers and toddlers group on Thursdays, 1.30-3.30pm (homeworkers especially welcome). "Encourage your child to read" class on Mondays, 5.30-7.30pm. Supplementary school now operating. Classes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Contact them for further information. Also see ADVICE and Neighbourhood English Classes and Gingerbread under COMMUNITY GROUPS listings on this page.

Women

HACKNEY ABORTION CAMPAIGN
Meetings fortnightly at 16 Parkholme Road, E8. Contact 249 3768 for details.

WOMEN'S CENTRE
1 Cazenove Road, N16.
Advice, creche, children's clothes swap shop, beginners photography, crafts, yoga, relaxation, consciousness raising groups, food co-op, alternative medicine, self-defence. Further information from 806 6664. All women welcome.

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE
Tel. 340 6145. 24 hour information and advice.

HACKNEY SOCIALIST FEMINIST GROUP
Meets first and third Monday of each month at the Factory, Matthias Road, N16.

HACKNEY TRADES COUNCIL WOMEN'S SUB COMMITTEE
Re-formed recently. Meets once a month. Contact Judy Newcombe, 254 0685 for details. All women and men welcome.

Children

HACKNEY UNDER FIVES
c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9145.
Information and support for parents with children below school age. Contact Madge Harte. Stores are available every Saturday from 10am-12.30pm. Open monthly meetings first Tuesday of every month at 8pm. in Centerprise.

HACKNEY PLAY ASSOCIATION
c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9145.
Information, advice and help to people organising play facilities for children. Contact Cheryl Broadway or Mo Ross.

Men

DALSTON MEN'S GROUP
Contact Pete, 39 Parkhome Road, E8. Tel. 249 3072.

EAST LONDON/BRIXTON MEN'S GROUP
Contact Paul, 12 Montague Road, E8. Tel. 254 9497.

EAST LONDON MEN'S CENTRE
19 Redmans Road, E1. Tel. 790 2454.

Advice

Free legal advice on housing, landlord and tenant, employment, social security, welfare, matrimonial, immigration and discrimination problems can be obtained from the following centres:

CENTERPRISE
136 Kingsland High Street, E8. Tel. 254 9632.
THURSDAYS 6.30-7.30pm.

HOXTON HALL
128a Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 5431.
WEDNESDAYS 7-8pm.

KINGSMEAD
Wally Foster Centre, Homerton High Street, E9. Tel. 985 3804.
TUESDAYS 7-8pm.

SNAGS
102 Manor Road, N16. Tel. 800 3770.
MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS 7-8pm. (802 7949).

ALLEN ROAD
12 Allen Road, N16.
THURSDAYS 7-8pm.

Advice can also be obtained from:

HACKNEY ADVICE BUREAU & LAW CENTRE
236-8 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 8446.
Open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm (7.30 on Thursdays).
Legal aid and advice on housing, rents, repairs and employment problems.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX
1-11 Hoxton Street, N1. Tel. 739 4654.
106 Old Street, EC1. Tel. 253 2155.

HACKNEY COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
245 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 985 5244.
TUESDAYS 7-8.30pm.
Immigration, discrimination, housing law and other problems.

THE FAMILY CENTRE
50 Rectory Road, N16. Tel. 249 8334.
Information and help in all community problems. Cooking, washing, creche facilities. Open all day.

HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE
302-4 Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 8123.
Helps with all housing problems. Repairs, rebates, landlord/tenant, council/tenant.

HACKNEY CENTRAL INFORMATION BUREAU
Town Hall, Mare Street, E8. Tel. 986 3123.

HACKNEY NORTH LABOUR PARTY ADVICE CENTRE
5 Stamford Hill, N16.
Advice and information on legal, financial, welfare, housing, social security and personal problems.
FRIDAYS 7-8pm.

Advice can also be obtained from **HARAMBEE 2 PROJECT, OFF CENTRE** and **FRIENDS ANONYMOUS**. See Community Groups listing on this page.

For MPs and councillors Advice surgeries see **LABOUR PARTY** under **POLITICAL GROUPS** listing on this page.

Food

DOWN TO EARTH
Durham Row, Stepney Green, E1. Tel. 790 3512.
Wholefood shop selling grains, flour, beans, honey, herbs etc.
Monday-Saturday 9am-6pm.

FOOD FOR ALL
3 Cazenove Road, N16. Tel. 806 4138.
Wholefood shop, also selling books and crafts. All food carries levy to support the women's centre next door (see **WOMEN**) and proposed school at 5 Cazenove Road.

Meditation

ANANDA MARGA
For spiritual progress and social change. Introduction to meditation classes every Wednesday 7.30pm. at 1 Cazenove Road, N16. Everyone welcome.

Welfare Rights

HACKNEY CLAIMANTS UNION
Meets in Centerprise every Friday at 11am.
Group for all who are claiming benefit.

Ecology

WASTE PAPER etc.
Take old newspaper, magazines, cardboard, clean rags and car batteries to RESEARCH INTO CHILD BLINDNESS, Drysdale Street, N1 (just off Hoxton Street) and get given FREE Green Shield Stamps! 2 stamps per pound of paper.
Monday-Friday 7am-4pm, Saturday 9.30am-12.30pm.
All the paper YOU take in goes to help blind children to see.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
Local group: contact John Leach 739 2301.

SERA (Socialist and Environmental Resources Association)
North East London branch meets regularly. Contact Jackie Hutson, 17 Mentmore Terrace, E8.

Education

SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
83 Eleanor Road, E8.
Contact Beverly Bowes for details.

Gays

EAST LONDON FAGGOTS
Collective of gay socialists living and working in East London. Contact 19 Redmans Road, E1. Tel. 790 2454.

GAY SWITCHBOARD
Tel. 837 7324. 24 hour information and advice.

Events and Meetings

From Mon 5 Dec. Half Moon Theatre, Alie St, E.1. 8pm. Pirate Jenny in "Line of Fire" by David Edgar.
Tues 6-Sat 24 Dec. Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E.8. Exhibition of paintings by John Catt.
Tues 6 Dec. Centerprise. 8pm. WEA. Dr Reed, Hackney Hospital. "Psychiatric Services in Hackney."
Wed 7 Dec. Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, E.3. 8.30pm. Half Moon Theatre in "Grand Larceny". Last chance to see this! (see back page.)
Fri 9 Dec. Centerprise. 7pm. SACU. Report from two workers recently returned from China. (see page 3.)
Fri 9 Dec. Hoxton Hall, Hoxton St, N.1. 8pm. Moving Picture Mime Show in "The Seven Samurai."
Sun 11 December. Hoxton Hall. 7.30pm. Starlight Variety Show.
Mon 12 Dec. Centerprise. 7.30pm. AGM. Users to elect a new Council of Management.
Mon 12 Dec. Centerprise. 8pm. WEA. David Elliot, Undercurrents, on setting up community technology projects in Hackney.
Tues 13 Dec. Centerprise. 8pm. Julian Barnett, PROMPT, on Psychiatry is irrelevant to the problems of today.
Wed 14 Dec. Family Centre, 50 Rectory Road, N.16. Vishnu Sharma, Indian Workers Ass. Southall, on the Fight against Racism.
Thurs 15-Sat 17 Dec. Hoxton Hall. 8pm. "The Snow Queen." Traditional Christmas Show.
Thurs 15-Wed 21 Dec. Half Moon Theatre. 8pm. "Dick Whittington and the City of Fear" by Andy Smith.
Mon 19 Dec. Half Moon Theatre. 7pm. Writers Workshop.
Mon 19 Dec. Centerprise. 8pm. CP open meeting. Andrew Puddephat on economic policy.
Tues 20 Dec. Centerprise 8pm. Hackney Community Housing Action Group. Inaugural meeting. (see page 3.)
Fri 23 Dec. Hoxton Hall. 8pm. Tapestry of music for King Wenceslas and his page. St George's Canzona. Traditional early Christmas music.
Fri 6 January. Hoxton Hall. 8pm. Music Hall with Betty Bray.

Political Groups

HACKNEY LABOUR PARTY
HACKNEY SOUTH & SHOREDITCH
Constituents advice service at 7.30pm. every Friday at 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Ron Brown, MP, available 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. Margaret Morgan, GLC Councillor, available 1st Friday of each month. Local councillors every Friday. Advice service also operates at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Bletchley Street, N1, at 7pm. on 1st and 3rd Fridays. Ron Brown is present on 1st and 3rd Fridays, Margaret Morgan on 3rd Fridays, and local councillors on 1st and 3rd Fridays.
HACKNEY SOUTH LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS: for details contact secretary c/o 96 Dalston Lane, E8.

HACKNEY CENTRAL
Constituents advice service at 7.30pm. every Friday at 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Stanley Clinton Davis, MP, available every Friday. Ellis Hillman, GLC Councillor, available every other Friday. Local councillors every Friday.
HACKNEY CENTRAL LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS: for details contact Mrs A Smith, 294 Navarino Mansions, E8.

HACKNEY YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE
Meets weekly. All young people welcome.
HACKNEY COMMUNIST PARTY
Twelve branches hold meetings regularly throughout the borough. All welcome.
HACKNEY MORNING STAR GROUP
Meets weekly. Organises political, social and fund-raising events in support of Britain's socialist daily paper, the Morning Star. All Morning Star readers/supporters welcome.
For further information and a copy of the monthly newsletter detailing the meetings, campaigning actions etc. organised by the Hackney Morning Star group, Young Communist League and Communist Party contact David Green, 126 Amhurst Road, E8. Tel. 249 6374.

HACKNEY SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
Meets regularly in the borough. Contact Liz 739 9772 for details.

LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST GROUP
c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E8.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST ASSOCIATION
Box 11, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, N1.

SOCIETY FOR ANGLO-CHINESE UNDERSTANDING
Hackney/Islington Branch. Contact Maureen Taylor or Mon Lawlor (263 4359 during daytime). SACU is open to anyone who favours friendship and understanding between Britain and socialist China. Meets regularly at Centerprise.

HACKNEY COMMITTEE AGAINST RACIALISM
All-party anti-racist campaign. Meets first Wednesday of each month at the Family Centre, Rectory Road, N16.

Music and Broadcasts

ISLINGTON & HACKNEY MUSIC WORKSHOP
Sing-song third Thursday every month, 8pm. Free. The Florence, Florence Street, N1.

HACKNEY HOSPITAL RADIO
PROGRAMME SCHEDULE:
Mon-Fri 7pm-9pm Pop show
9pm-11pm Easy Listening show
Sunday 3pm-5pm Pop show
5pm-7pm Soul show
7pm-8pm Hackney's Week (local news)
8pm-10pm Easy Listening show
Hackney Radio Roadshow: contact Gary Putwain 986 3833 or Hackney Hospital Radio 985 5555 extension 115 for details.

GRAND LARCENY!

Part One

How They Filched Wiltons from The East End (GLC Cert.X)

Most avid HPP readers will know that it gives us no pleasure whatsoever to announce that the contract for the restoration of Wiltons Music Hall has gone to Taylor-Woodrow Construction Ltd.

Wiltons will be a National Theatre of Music Hall on its present size and will be run by GLC representatives, trustees of Wiltons Music Hall and members with commercial and educational interests. The Tory GLC have decided the Half Moon's plans to use the old music hall as a theatre and community centre are "not totally satisfactory".

For the Half Moon Theatre the decision represents £13,000 and 4 years work wasted. One additional insult to

the Half Moon was that they were not notified of the GLC's decision until after it had appeared in the papers. The main reasons for the rejection of the Half Moon's plans was because it was felt they had not raised enough money to carry the project through and also that the Half Moon's type of theatre would not be suited to Wiltons.

Rob Walker, the theatre's artistic director said that although he loves music hall, a 6-day a week music hall simply isn't viable today and that the GLC's decision was principally a political one. Apparently although the previous Labour controlled GLC had decided to award the contract to the Half Moon Rob felt that their solici-

tors had anticipated a reversal of the decision with a Tory victory at the elections and had deliberately stalled with the preparation of the contract.

Rob said that they hadn't had any time yet to start thinking about other venues but they would be looking. They can only hope that Sandy Sendford, the Chairman of the GLC's Planning Committee can be taken at his word when he expressed his determination to help the Half Moon find alternative premises.

Rob said that it was likely they would be able to use Wiltons from time to time for their plays. Disappointed though they were, they would not be turning their back on Wiltons in a huff.

Interval

Two aspects of the Half Moon work that get very little publicity

The Writers' Workshop

Local writers meet every Monday to discuss and criticise their own and other writer's plays. This has a vital role to play in bringing to the fore new talent and original ideas.

One regular at the workshop is Billy Colville, born and bred in the East End and whose latest play "The Treatment" is about the effects of the hospital cuts. It has been performed at Bethnal Green hospital, which is threatened with closure.

The Youth Team

This is the Half Moon double-act of Pete and Lenny (aided and abetted as necessary) who make regular visits to schools, youth clubs and centres for the mentally handicapped etc. Pete and Lenny are permanently with the Half Moon and get a tremendous response from kids and adults alike.

Before, during and after the interval actors and audience alike tend to mosey down to the White Swan, a pub two doors along from the theatre. The interval is a quarter of an hour long and it'll take you almost that to get served! Never mind though, they have a very civilised arrangement whereby you can pay a deposit on your glass and take your drink back into the theatre.

Part Two

The Show Goes On ...

The Half Moon's latest play "Grand Larceny" is a potted history of Wiltons in a series of funny sketches. After a fairly brief period when it was the thriving music hall that most people remember it by today, it first became a rough club for local whores and seamen and then in 1855 a Wesleyan Mission took over and established a community centre there. For fifty years it became a real part of East End life and was used as a dance hall, social club, soup kitchen, youth club and boxing club. After the war it became a rag warehouse but for the last ten years it has stood empty.

In one sketch the company shows the way "torches" are hired to set fire

to warehouses in the docklands, partly for the insurance money and partly to enable the land to be redeveloped for more profitable uses. Thus a building such as Wiltons with a preservation order on it is particularly vulnerable. There is also a very graphic sketch on the Ronan Point disaster. Ronan Point is one of an estate of tower blocks in Canning Town owned by Newham Council and built by Taylor Woodrow. Those are a couple of the more serious sketches. Most of the sketches are just very funny and at times the connection with Wiltons is a rather tenuous one.

The play has run for 4 weeks at the Half Moon and then gone on tour and played at East London venues such as

Chats Palace in Clapton, Hoxton Hall and State One at Stratford. If you haven't yet seen it, try to get along to the final performance at Queen Mary College in the Mile End Road at 8.30 pm on 7 December.

HPP thoroughly recommends the play despite the fact that the cast must all be very depressed over the Wiltons decision.

Andy Smith has also written the Half Moon's Christmas Panto which has the somewhat enigmatic title of "Dick Whittington, or the City in Fear". This play runs from the 15 December. Before that there are two plays by touring theatre companies at the Half Moon (see full details on the Information page.)

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS!

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative, non-profit making newspaper produced for the people of Hackney by a group of people who live in Hackney. We have no Editor, no shareholders, no commercial advertising and no party political backers. HPP is YOUR paper: anyone who lives or works in Hackney is welcome to help us. No-one gets paid by the paper and all decisions are made collectively. You can tell us what you think about the paper, or volunteer to help write, produce or sell it at an open meeting to be held on

TUESDAY 20th DECEMBER
at 8pm in Centerprise.

Or you can contact us by writing to us c/o Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High Street, E.8, or by ringing 249 0311 (evenings and weekends.)

HPP is sold through various newsagents and other outlets throughout Hackney. If you think that your newsagent would like to sell it, then please contact us. We also sell copies through individuals and on various housing estates. If you don't think that you can spare the time to become more fully involved in producing HPP, but you enjoy reading it, and think more people should read it, then please get in touch if you are willing to sell a few copies to your friends and neighbours or at meetings.

Riddle by Veronica

What did the traffic light say to the car?

!amsuv :stop, I am changing!

Unfortunately, no one submitted an entry to last month's crossword. We'll try and make the next one a little easier.

Solution to HPP Crossword No 1

ACROSS

1. Rover 3. Refuse 7. Lies 8. Terrain 10. Art Lover 13. Simon 14. Earns 17. True Blue 19. Manners 21. Oslo 22. Molest 23. Steam

DOWN

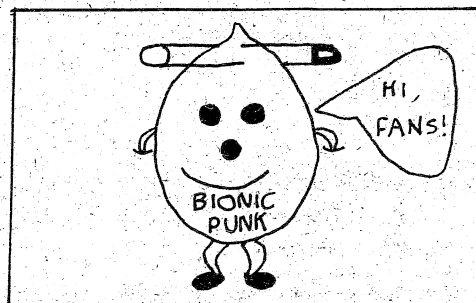
1. Releases 2. Easel 4. Errors 5. Ski 6. Stove 9. Animal 11. Tartan 12. Anteroom 15. Steers 16. Burst 18. Bloat 20. Ado

**BILL the
PUNK
BLOB**

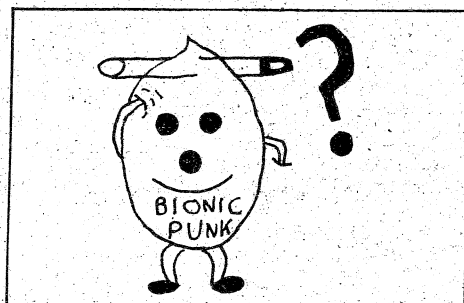
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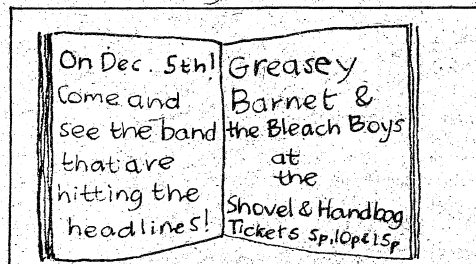
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____



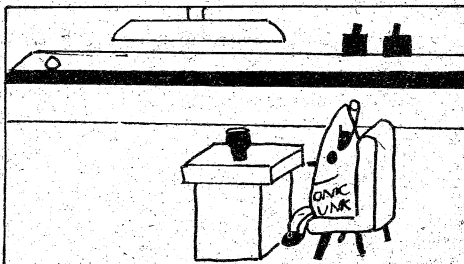
Yes, Friends! He's here again. Bigger, faster than he ever was before. (It wasn't really the bionic surgery - it was all that Centerprise coffee!)



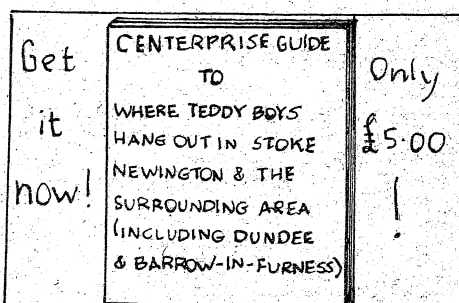
However, there was only one thing on his mind: How was he going to get his chick, Cruella Punk, back into his life? He would just have to find where his enemy, Greasey Barnet, lived.



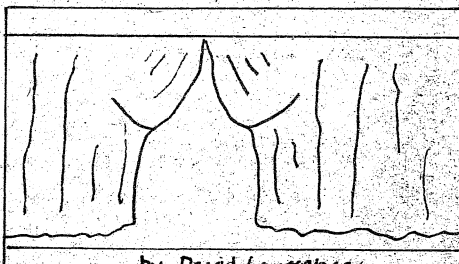
On page 366, he found what he was looking for. Greasey Barnet was playing at a Dalston pub on Dec. 5th. "I'll show him the knuckles of my fist!" said Bill.



So Bill sat down with his drink on Dec. 5th and waited for the show to begin. However, before the band came on, there was an announcement:



"I know!" thought Bill. "I'll pop down to Centerprise and get the new Ted guide (and have some more of that coffee!)" So he went to Centerprise.



"Ladies and gentlemen! We'd like to introduce our new lead singer, Cruella Punk!" Bill's heart leaped! Would he ever be with his chick again? Read the next episode and you might find out!!!!!!